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A  
LETTER  
OF THE  
Bishop of CHICHESTER,  
*Sim. Patrie Simon Patrie*  
TO HIS  
CLERGY.

Freehold  
Book 199

LONDON,

Printed for Ric. Chiswell, at the Rose and  
Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1690.

LETTER

OF THE

BIRD OF CHINA

TO HIS

GILBERT

LONDON

1850

PRINTED BY

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L E T T E R  
O F T H E  
Bishop of CHICHESTER,  
T O H I S  
C L E R G Y.

*My Dear Brethren,*

**I** Send you this, in pursuance of His Majesty's Letter, that was sent to me by My Lord Bishop of *London*, which, according to my duty, I have not long ago transmitted to all you the Clergy of my Diocese. I do bless God that has put into His Majesty's Heart such a Zeal for this our Church, and such a sense of the ways that are most proper for preserving it, and which by the Blessing of God will certainly do it. For if the Pastors and Guides of the Church of all Ranks, do adorn their Profession with a good Conversation, and apply themselves seriously and zealously to the Duties of their Function, the Church will both shine and prosper in spite of all the opposition that can be made to it from its enemies. The least blemish in a Church man's Life, as it is searched out and observed by all men, so it not only lessens the force of all his other Labours; but it weakens very much the credit of the whole

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Church,

Church, which is often judged by the Errors and Disorders of every one of its Pastors.

Yet it is not enough for men in Holy Orders to be free from those crying sins which are odious to all Christians, but are to be detested out of measure in Church-men. It is a monstrous thing to see one of that Holy Profession give himself to the excesses of Eating and Drinking, or other Sensual Appetites, to be guilty of Injustice or Lying, of ungoverned Passion or Swearing, of Malice or filthy Avarice. These things ought not to be named but with detestation among us. We ought not only to be blameless and harmless, but to shine as lights in the World, and to shew in our lives, that to which we exhort our People in our Sermons, being Patterns to the Believers *in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith and Purity, and giving attendance to Reading, to Exhortation and to Doctrine; that in so doing we may both save our selves and also them that hear us.*

Consider often what a great Account you have to make to God for the Souls committed to your charge.

Remember and read over frequently the Vows that you made to God at your Ordination, and the Charge that was then given you, and examine your selves frequently whether you do observe these or not.

Think how Sacred a Trust that of Souls is, which the Son of God has purchased with his own Blood: and how severely he will reckon with you, if through your ill Example, bad Doctrine, or the other neglects of your duty, those Souls perish, for which he died.

Think it not enough barely to read Prayers, or perform other Divine Offices among them: You must go often among them to instruct, exhort, admonish, or reprove them, as there is occasion for it.

You must instruct the Youth, visit the Sick, reprove Offenders, and reconcile such Differences as happen at any time to create Quarrels among your People, and all this you must do with Zeal and Affection.

And in particular, you ought to warn your People of the heavy Judgments of God, which the sins of the Land give us just cause to apprehend; and that the rather, since God has spared us so long, whilst he has visited so many Nations round  
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about us in so terrible a manner; and has given us so great a measure of the light of his Gospel, and so long a course of Temporal as well as Spiritual Blessings.

And frequently set forth to them the heinousness of such sins as you find do most abound among them, whether they be the crying ones related to in the Acts of Parliament lately sent you, or others: You ought to represent to them the high contempt done to God, when Men make their Bodies, which ought to be Temples for God to dwell in by his Spirit, the members of a Harlot; and the Indignity done their own Natures, when by the excesses of Drinking, a Man has changed himself into a Beast.

You ought to shew them what a horrible Affront it is to Almighty God to profane his Holy Name by rash and vain Swearing, and what a dreadful thing it is to swear falsely, even in common Discourse, but much more when it is before a Judge.

You ought to set often before your People the great wickedness of Lying and Slander, of Falshood and Injustice, and of all Cheating and Oppression, and that in all cases of wrong done their Neighbours, there is no repentance that is acceptable to God, but that which is accompanied with restitution or reparation, as far as the Party can possibly make it.

You are often to represent to your People the indispensable necessity of true holiness, without which no Man can see God, and without which, their believing a true Faith, and their being of a true Church, cannot serve them in any stead. For we are assured from the Word of God, that not only *Idolaters, but Fornicators and Adulterers, Thieves, Covetous Persons, Drunkards, Revilers, and Extortioners cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

Put them often in mind of the importance of the Word *Reformed Churches*, which imports, that as our Doctrine and Worship are by the blessing of God *Reformed*; so our Lives ought also to be *Reformed*; otherwise all the advantages that we have of light and truth beyond other Churches, will rise up in Judgment against us, if we do not live suitably to them.

But above all things study to possess your people with a deep sense of the duty that they owe to God their Maker, and to Jesus Christ their Saviour, that so they may apply themselves to the exercises of Devotion in secret, to the frequent  
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ing the Publick Worship, and chiefly to the receiving the Sacrament with that serious disposition of mind which becomes such Holy Performances, that so they may delight in going together to the House of God.

And in order to their doing this aright, infuse into them a great reverence for the Lord's Day, as a time separated from the common business of life, for their attending on the Worship of God, and such other Religious Exercises as may both increase their knowledge and their sense of Divine Matters, and that therefore they ought not to satisfy themselves with going to Church, and assisting publickly in the Service of God; but that they set themselves more to Prayer on that day, and to the reading of Scriptures, or other good Books, both apart and together in their Families, that so they may grow up in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

These things you must open to your People frequently in season and out of season, both at Church, and from house to house. And I charge you by all the Authority that I have over you, by the Zeal that you bear to the Church of *England*, and as you desire to have from your Labours and your People, a Crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord, and as you bear a due regard both to your own Souls, and to the Souls that are committed to your care, and to that Precious Blood by which they were redeemed, as you desire to be faithful to your Ordination-Vows, and to have a share in those blessed words; *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*: That you will give your selves wholly to these things, that you will account no labour great in advancing that Work for which our Saviour spared not his own life: and that you will pursue all the parts of your Ministry with a Zeal suitable to the importance of them, that so we doing our parts faithfully under the Protection and Favour of Our Gracious King and Queen, whom God long preserve, this Church may recover its first Glory, and may so shine in all those things which can adorn our Holy Profession, that by the Divine Favour and Blessing she may still continue in safety, and may so conquer and gain upon all that depart from her, that all her Children may with one Heart, and one Mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: who undoubtedly will succeed and prosper us in all our undertakings; if we earnestly and constantly employ the assistance of his Grace,



Grace, and apply our selves, with serious endeavours, to consider how to make them effectual. In order to which I shall send this Letter, with these Three Directions.

I. *First*, That your Obedience to His Majesty's Letter may be regular and uniform, I desire you to observe this Method. On the *Sunday* *sevensnight* before the Assizes, read the Act of Parliament against PERJURY and preach upon that Subject. On the *Second Sunday* in *May*, read the Act for the Observation of the LORD'S DAY, and exhort your Parishioners to the religious Observation thereof. On the *First Sunday* in *Advent* read the Act against DRUNKENNESS, and likewise preach against that Vice. On the *Second Sunday* in *Lent* the Act against BLASPHEMY, *Swearing and Cursing*; and preach on that Subject. On the *Fourth Sunday* in *Lent*, against the Sins of ADULTERY and FORNICATION. It is intended that *Homilies* be provided for all these days: But till they be, let every one furnish himself with Sermons upon these Heads, and continue this course from year to year.

II. *Secondly*, That *Confirmation* may be administred to Edification, and all disorders and crowds may then be avoided, I desire you to take Notice that I will Confirm none, but such whose Names shall be delivered to me by you, the Ministers of the several Parishes from whence they come: with a Certificate under your Hands that you have examined them, and find them not only able to repeat the Words of the *Catechism*, but also sensible of the solemn Vow that was made in their Name at their Baptism, which they are desirous to renew themselves. Let it be your endeavour therefore to dispose the young People of your Parish unto this. And for the better performance of it, I will confirm as frequently as I am able, not only in the Cathedral at *Easter* and such solemn times: but also when I go to any Church in my Diocese, where those in the Neighbourhood, who are fitted to be confirmed, may resort to me.

III. *Thirdly*,

III. *Thirdly*, I desire you to signifie unto such as you find desirous to be put into Holy Orders, that I expect they come to me a *Month* at least before *Ordination-Sunday*: that I may have sufficient time not only to try and examine them, but also to give notice of their intentions to the Parish where they live; that if they have any impediment to object why they should not be admitted, I may have timely Information of it. For there cannot be too much care taken, that the Flock of Christ be not committed into the Hands of bad Men; but such may be set over them as will watch for their Souls: fleeing youthful lusts, and following Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, wish them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Unto whose Grace and Blessing I do most earnestly commend you and your Labours.

May 9.  
1690.

SYMON CICESTRENSIS.

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